

REMARKS

Claims 1-8 have been examined. Claims 9-30 are withdrawn as being directed to a non-elected invention. The Examiner has indicated that claims 3 and 5-8 contain allowable subject matter.

I. Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,022,287 to Klemen et al. (“Klemen”) and U.S. Patent No. 5,904,631 to Morisawa et al. (“Morisawa”)

The Examiner has rejected claims 1, 2 and 4 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Klemen in view of Morisawa.

A. Claim 1

Applicant submits that claim 1 is patentable over the cited references. For example, claim 1 recites, “said casing member is provided, at a front end thereof, with a coupling section fixed to said internal combustion engine and at a rear end thereof, with a mounting section supported by a vehicle body.”

The Examiner maintains that Klemen discloses the above features (pg. 2 of Office Action). Klemen discloses a hybrid driving unit having a first electric motor 24, a power splitting planetary gear 84, 112, a second electric motor 30 and a transmission (Fig.5). The transmission is disposed at a rearmost part. Thus the second electric motor 30 is not disposed at a rearmost part. Furthermore, the Examiner asserts that a numeral position of a transmission housing 12 corresponds to the claimed mounting section. Applicant submits, however, that since an oil pan is attached on the position 12, the driving unit cannot be supported by a vehicle body

at the position 12. Therefore, the position 12 does not correspond to the claimed mounting section disposed at the rear end of the casing member as recited in claim 1.

Claim 1 also recites, “a transmission disposed on said axis and shifting and transmitting revolution of said second rotor of said second electric motor to said output shaft,” and “said second electric motor is disposed in a rearmost part with respect to said power splitting planetary gear, said first electric motor, and said transmission disposed along said axis in said casing member.”

The Examiner acknowledges that Klemen fails to disclose the claimed positioning with respect to the two motors, the power splitting planetary gear and the transmission, but contends that Morisawa does. In particular, the Examiner refers to Figure 8 of Morisawa. In Figure 8, Morisawa discloses a hybrid driving unit having two electric motors MG1, MG5, a power splitting planetary gear 110 and a reduction gear 310. The first electric motor MG1 is disposed at a rearmost part. Thus, the Examiner attempts to maintain that motor MG1 discloses the claimed second motor. As shown, however, the output shaft 108 is connected to the second motor MG5. Since the motor MG5 is connected to the output shaft 108, the motor MG5 would constitute the claimed second motor, not motor MG1. Contrary to the recitations of claim 1, this second motor MG5 is not disposed at a rearmost part. Accordingly, if Klemen and Morisawa were combined, the alleged combination would fail to disclose the claimed invention since neither reference teaches nor suggests a second electric motor that is disposed at a rearmost part.

Furthermore, in Klemen, the second motor 30 is connected with not only a sun gear shaft 168 of the transmission, but also with a sun gear shaft 148 of the power splitting planetary gear

112. Thus, it would be impossible to dispose the second motor 30 at a rearmost part, because the relationship of the second motor 30 connection described above cannot be achieved.

In the claimed invention, the hybrid drive unit has a first electric motor, a second electric motor, the transmission shifting and transmitting revolution of the second electric motor to the output shaft, and the power splitting planetary gear. The second electric motor is disposed at a rearmost part among the first electric motor, the power splitting planetary gear and the transmission. According to this configuration, the second electric motor is disposed at a rearmost part among the first and second electric motor which are heavy devices, and supported by a vehicle body through a mounting section. As a result, the invention can improve rigidity for the support of the second electric motor, which rotates at a high speed based on the transmission and cases vibration easily. Thus, vibration transmitted to vehicle body is reduced.

At least based on the foregoing, Applicant submits that claim 1 is patentable over the cited references.

B. Claims 2 and 4

Since claims 2 and 4 are dependent upon claim 1, Applicant submits that such claims are patentable at least by virtue of their dependency.

II. Allowable Subject Matter

As set forth above, the Examiner has indicated that claims 3 and 5-8 contain allowable subject matter, but are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim.

III. Newly Added Claim

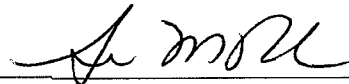
By this Amendment, Applicant has added claim 31 to provide more varied protection of the present invention. Applicant submits that claim 31 reads on the elected invention.

IV. Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

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